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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF THE BAY AREA TO CENTRAL VALLEY HIGH-SPEED TRAIN DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, SCH# 2005112051

Your request for comments on the Notice of Preparation of the Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Draft Environmental Impact Report was received on 18 November 2005. The proposed project is to construct a high-speed train system that would be over 700 miles long and capable of speeds of over 200 miles per hour with electrically powered trains on fully grade-separated tracks. The proposed project would connect and serve California's major metropolitan areas, extending from Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area through the Central Valley to Los Angeles and San Diego. This Notice of Preparation evaluates the portion of the rail system from the San Francisco Bay Area to the Central Valley.

The final CEQA environmental document needs to describe all solid and/or liquid wastes that may be generated by the proposed project and how they will be handled, treated, and disposed.

The final CEQA environmental document needs to consider growth-inducing impacts to station cities and surrounding areas in regard to increased development and the demand for resources such as drinking water and wastewater services. The final CEQA environmental document also needs to consider how storm water drainage may be affected by the proposed project and propose mitigation measures to minimize water quality and quantity impacts.

The Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code of the final project is 4011-Railroads, Line-Hauling Operating; therefore, compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. CAS000001 for Discharges of Storm Water Associated With Industrial Activities will be required for discharges to surface waters, including ephemeral and intermittent drainages, or municipal storm sewer systems. To obtain coverage under the General Permit, the Authority must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the permit, a site map, and an appropriate fee to the State Water Resources Control Board and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) must be prepared, prior to commencing operations at the facility. The SWPPP must address issues associated with the operation of the rail line, including passenger stations, and maintenance facilities.

California Environmental Protection Agency



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As construction associated with the project will disturb one acre or more, compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit No. CAS000002 for Discharges of Storm Water Associated With Construction Activity will be required for potential discharges to surface waters, including ephemeral and intermittent drainages, and municipal storm drain systems. Before construction begins, the Authority must submit an NOI to comply with the permit, a site map, and an appropriate fee to the State Water Resources Control Board and a SWPPP must be prepared. The SWPPP must contain at a minimum all items listed in Section A of the General Permit including descriptions of measures taken to prevent or eliminate unauthorized non-storm water discharges, and both temporary (e.g., fiber rolls, silt fences, etc.) and permanent (e.g., vegetated swales, riparian buffers, etc.) best management practices (BMPs) that will be implemented to prevent pollutants from discharging with storm water into waters of the United States.

If the project will result in construction dewatering discharges, compliance with the NPDES No. CAG995001, General Order No. 5-00-175 for Dewatering and Other Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters may be required. Before construction begins, the Authority must submit an NOI to comply with the permit and a filing fee to this Regional Board office. The dewatering General Order is applicable only if the discharge does not contain significant quantities of pollutants, and is less than four months in duration or has an average dry weather flow of less than 0.25 million gallons per day. Otherwise, the Authority must apply for site-specific waste discharge requirements (WDRs). A representative sample of the construction dewatering discharge would need to be collected and analyzed to demonstrate that no constituents of concern are present in quantities that would cause an exceedance of water quality objectives.

If the project will result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters or wetlands (jurisdictional waters), the Authority must obtain a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act from the US Army Corps of Engineers and a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from this office. Regional Board staff will review the Section 401 certification application to ensure that discharges will not violate water quality standards. If the project will result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into wetlands that are determined by the Corps to be non-jurisdictional, the Authority will not be required to obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification, but may be required to submit a report of waste discharge if the wetlands are waters of the State. The Regional Board will either prescribe WDRs that will incorporate measures to mitigate potentially significant impacts to water quality and potential public nuisances or issue a waiver of WDRs. For more information regarding Section 404 permitting, contact the Sacramento District of the Corps of Engineers at (916) 557-5250.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Notice of Preparation of the Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Draft Environmental Impact Report. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please call me at (559) 445-6190.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'WD' followed by a stylized flourish.

W. DALE HARVEY
Senior Engineer
RCE No. 55628

cc: State Clearinghouse, Sacramento